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ABSTRACT

The current professional development needs (identification and remediation) of vocational teachers who teach handicapped children were studied. Data collection and analysis were used to answer three questions regarding (1) positive change in vocational teachers' attitudes toward disabled persons when their needs are assessed and provided for in staff development sessions, (2) clustering of vocational teachers' needs around certain issues, and (3) staff development sessions requested by vocational teachers to prepare them to teach handicapped children. Three relationships were investigated: teacher attitudes and training effects, needs-assessment-driven inservice sessions and teacher satisfaction, and teacher attitudes and training suited to perceived needs. Results indicated that teacher attitudes changed after inservice sessions, but not to a large degree. The average increase was five points on the Attitude toward Disabled Persons Scale. Needs-assessment-driven inservice was satisfying to teachers and perceived training needs were related to teacher attitudes, but again in a less than robust fashion. The priority needs areas of vocational teachers were for more pupil information and pertinent didactic materials and strategies delivered by resource personnel in person and/or delivered through courses, seminars, workshops, or school visitations. (YLB)

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INFLUENCING VOCATIONAL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD SPECIAL NEEDS-HANDICAPPED CHILDREN THROUGH NEEDS-ASSESSMENT DRIVEN INSERVICE TRAINING

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A. INTRODUCTION

1. PROBLEM

Federal legislation has spurred vocational education for the handicapped, perhaps more on the basis of the right-to-be-educated, than on school's capacity to teach them, or student's capacity to profit from the opportunity. This situation has served only to worsen what were considered to be already persistent problems in the field (ineffective inservice teacher development and vocational teachers' low perception of professional status).

Teachers and administrators have faced this reality, and many subsequent problems have surfaced, including:

(a) negative attitudes toward the handicapped and lowered expectations by some vocational teachers;

(b) threatened quality of curriculum, instruction and evaluation; and

(c) related organizational and administrative problems of Area Vocational-Technical Schools.

It is obvious that threats to efficient and systematic delivery of services are rife when so many issues permeate the daily teaching environments. The screening, placement and education of thousands of children are jeopardized daily as well. A thorough approach then to any solution-hypothesis must regard the current professional development needs of the teaching staff as well as their present attitudes toward the handicapped.

Though today many more opportunities to provide vocational education to the handicapped exist than previously, many school districts have found it difficult to develop and implement programs. The central problem seems to be around the fact of, and the process for, integrating handicapped into regular vocational programs. The national standard for inclusion for the handicapped is 10%; the actual integrated figure for vocational education is 2% (USOE, 1982). This is unfortunate as regular vocational education classes are, by and large, well organized and taught by highly skilled instructors.

Specific criticism of vocational education opportunities in the same report focused on resistance - explicit negative efforts - to admitting handicapped students to vocational programs. Some research has suggested that negative attitudes and expectations of teachers definitely militate against integration (D'Alonzo and Barrett, 1977; Minner, 1982). Fortunately, strategies have been discovered which apparently alter and improve these negative perceptions and expectations. McDaniel (1982) found specific workshops, professional courses (graduate and undergraduate) influenced positively and significantly the attitude scores of three out of four experimental vocational teacher groups. The particular methodology favored special needs workshops and vocational-special needs courses at the inservice level (staff development). The research review on which this

study was based indicated that only 3% of vocational education teachers had completed any courses on special needs of handicapped students (USOE, 1979).

What is needed apparently is to assist the vocational teaching staff in becoming more accepting and supportive of teaching the handicapped. This can be accomplished, it seems, through attitude-modifying strategies at the inservice level.

However, what may substantially improve the odds would be to ask vocational teachers just how they would like to be helped: eg., what do they need to know about the handicapped and handicapping conditions; what support (organizational, instructional, counseling) do they feel is absolutely minimal for them to succeed in this new integrative venture; and what level of participation would they like to assume in planning for student placements in vocational shop area?

Minner and Knutsen (1980) suggest that information, internal organization and personal responsibility produce behavioral and attitudinal changes in vocational teachers.

The proposal was based on the assumption that people who recognize the need, relief and possibility of changing, in order to improve teaching skills, will probably do so when they know, control and handle more information and strategies.

2. OBJECTIVES

The current professional development needs (Identification and Remediation) of vocational teachers who teach handicapped children were addressed in this project.

Questions 1. Do vocational teachers' attitudes toward disabled persons change in a positive direction when teachers' needs are assessed and are provided for in staff development sessions?

2. How do vocational teachers' needs cluster around issues of child information, placement procedures (mainstreaming), teacher strategies and school policies of evaluation and curriculum?

3. What staff development sessions do vocational teachers request in order to be more ready to teach handicapped?

Each of the questions was answered with data collection and analysis.

Answers 1. Scores (pre- and posttest) on Attitude Toward Disabled Persons Scale administered September/ October and May.

2. Needs assessment form administered September/October.

3. Staff Development Sessions - analyzed from Needs Assessment form administered September (October).

B. REPORT

1. PROCEDURES

a. Teachers were administered a pre/post Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (1960). The treatment was derived from the needs assessment and was given as professional development activities (seminars, group work, consultations).

Independent variables = needs assessment form and professional development activities.

The dependent variable = scores on Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons Scale.

b. Population and Sample

Four area vocational education schools were utilized. Teaching staff in Cape May, Salem (2), and Cumberland Counties. The number of teacher-participants was 80.

c. Data and Instrumentation

1. Dependent measure - Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP), H.E. Yucker, J. R. Block and W.J. Campbell, 1960.

2. Vocational Teachers' Needs Assessment in Education of Handicapped. A 15 item open-ended survey of information, organizational and instructional needs. (Developed for project by principal investigator.) All teachers were administered the ATDP and the Needs Assessment measure before the project started. The seminars were developed based on the data from the needs assessment. The type of seminars (large group, small group, etc.) were determined also from requests in the needs assessment.

d. Analysis

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine pre-test differences, if any, among groups (ATDP).

RESULTS

Vocational teachers' attitudes toward the handicapped changed in positive directions over the length of the project. Scores for all teachers in all schools averaged a 5 point increase. Individual school scores increased from a low of +2 points to a high of +10.5 points. Table I summarizes the pre- and posttest scores. There were no significant differences (ANOVA; F=.67).

Vocational teachers' needs clustered around support needs, suppliers of support, methods of support delivery and modes of service delivery chosen by teachers. Table II includes the summary of ranges of need within categories.

Of particular interest in this study were the staff development modes suggested by teachers. These are included in Table II; the modes ranged from courses to discussion groups. The actual treatments administered to all teachers are listed in Figure 1.

TABLE I

PRE- AND POST SCORES OF VOCATIONAL TEACHERS ON ATTITUDE TOWARD DISABLED PERSONS

(N=80)

	PRE-TEST $\bar{X}$	POSTTEST $\bar{X}$	INCREASE
	74	79	5
School I (N=37)	78.3	82.3	4
School II (N=18	71.5	82	10.5
School III (N=18)	70	74.5	4.5
School IV (N=7)	76	78	2

TABLE II

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PRIORITIES SUMMARY FOR
ALL VOCATIONAL TEACHERS
(N=80)

TOPICAL SUPPORT NEEDS	FROM WHOM	HOW DELIVERED
Pupil Information and Explanations	Special Needs Coordinator	Profiles
Screening	Available Resource Personnel	Consultations: In Person
Teacher Assistants	Supervisors/Counselors	Films
Lower Ratios: Normal: Handicapped	Home Schools	Separate Schools
Methods, Materials, Equipment	Administrators	Reinforcement
Basic Skills Help/ Remedial	Family	Inservice
Curriculum	Special Services Department	
Understanding		

What would make you better able to teach handicapped students

Courses
Training Seminars
O.J.T. with Experienced Teachers
Visitations - Sending School
- Other Vocational Schools
Workshops
Discussion Groups

TREATMENTS

FIVE MODULES

I.	NEEDS ASSESSMENT EXPLANATION	1 HR.
* II.	METHODS/MATERIALS SEMINAR + FILM "A DIFFERENT APPROACH"	1 HR.
*III.	TEACHER EXPECTATIONS/STUDENT ROLE; RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHER/LEARNER EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE	1 HR.
IV.	INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES; SHOP VISIT TO EACH TEACHER	15 MINUTES EACH
* V.	STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTION MODEL AS A GUIDE TO MEETING TEACHER AND PUPIL NEEDS	1 HR.

FIGURE 1

*Copies of handouts in Appendix

3. INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The positive change in teacher attitudes toward disabled is an important result in this study. It supports McDaniel's (1982) conclusions that specific treatments throug.. professional interventions do alter positions of teachers toward pupils. Since the range of score changes was so wide (+2 to +10.5), it was decided to analyze years of teaching experience and number of handicapped taught in relation to the score increases. The school staff with the most teaching experience, 15 years, had the largest increase in attitude scores, although they had not taught the most handicapped students among the four staffs. Table III illustrates the years of experience, numbers of handicapped taught and attitude score increases. What may well have operated in School IV was an adverse multiplied effect of large numbers of handicapped students and meager years of teaching experience.

Vocational teachers' professional needs around handicapped students fell into predictable clusters like pupil information and school organization (Minner and Knutsen, 1980), in-person professional supports, and traditional requests for coursework and seminars. Throughout the course of personal visits with each of the vocational teachers the plea for administrator's understanding, reinforcement and interest surfaced

again and again. There seemed, as well to be a continuing assumption that teaching and managing handicapped children well came exclusively from possession of as yet to-be-acquired teaching strategies, which other 'successful' teachers already have.

TABLE III

Vocational Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience
NUmbers of Handicapped Taught and Attitude Since Increases

	$\bar{X}$ YEARS TEACHING	$\bar{X}$ NUMBER OF HANDICAPPED TAUGHT	INCREASE SCORES
School II (N=18)	15	50	10.5
School I (N=37)	7	90	4
School III (N=18)	4	36	4.5
School IV (N=7)	3	125	2

DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

On June 25, 1984, the nature, purpose and results of this study were presented to the Pennsylvania Vocational Education Conference, Lancaster, Pa.

A proposal has been submitted to participate in the national meeting of the Council for Exceptional Children, Anaheim, California (April, 1985).

Each of the participating schools has been (will have been) invited to offer an inservice session on the results of the study. A complete report will be issued to the superintendent and director (principal) of each vocational school in the study.

An attempt will be made to confer with the Vocational Education Special Needs Personnel in New Jersey through Dean Garwood.

An article will be submitted to the journal, Exceptional Children, this year.

STRATEGIES/ACTIVITIES EMPLOYED TO ELIMINATE SEX BIAS AND SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING

1. The film "A Different Approach" utilized adult handicapped workers, among whom there were dozens of women, in interviews, job stations, recreation and in professional roles.
2. The C-14 module, "Characteristics of Slower and More Capable Learners" exemplifies the learner as both male and female.

C. SUMMARY

1. CONCLUSIONS

Vocational teachers are apt to move behaviorally in a more positive direction when the following conditions prevail.

a. Attention is directed toward them, toward their situation and in response to explicit ways in which they make known their needs, frustrations and willingness to change;

b. Occasions are provided for them to meet as a group and in one-to-ones, to discuss, debate and explain specific classroom dynamics;

c. Seminars on group selected topics are provided, offered in response to generalized needs and interests (e.g., teaching strategies, expectations, teacher-pupil relationships).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Vocational school directors and superintendents need to be visible to and solicitous of the vocational teaching staff, well beyond routine administrative functions. Special needs personnel, pupil personnel staff, guidance and supervisory staff are needed to engender encouragement and reinforcement to vocational teachers. Vocational teachers desire more information (early) and a sense of partnership in the instructional program for each handicapped child.

There appears to be something like alienation which vocational teachers sense when they teach handicapped, without having lots of information about the students, or some hand-holding through personal attention to their condition.

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APPENDIX A

TREATMENT REFERENCES

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The Student with Special Needs: A Guide for Vocational Educators. University of Pittsburgh, under Pennsylvania Department of Education, 1983.

APPENDIX B

TREATMENT HANDOUTS

STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTION AS A GUIDE
TO CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

$\underline{\text{TEACHER}}_1$ welcomes
a capable, experienced, $\underline{\text{goal-seeker}}._1$

$\underline{\text{TEACHER}}_2$ provides a new goal
which the $\underline{\text{learner encounters}}._2$

$\underline{\text{TEACHER}}_3$ demonstrates achievement
and $\underline{\text{learner explores}}_3$ and $\underline{\text{seizes}}$ at least one solution.

$\underline{\text{TEACHER}}_4$ fosters refinements;
$\underline{\text{learner}}_4$ practices, rehearses and experiences goal closure.

$\underline{\text{TEACHER}}_5$ extends acknowledgement, reinforcement;
$\underline{\text{learner}}_5$ internalizes goal as personal affirmation of self.

Source: Psychology of Teacher/Pupil Needs in Classroom Interactions. (McGettigan, 1983)

SUMMARY

WHAT TEACHER NEEDS	WHAT PUPIL NEEDS
1. TO TEACH; TO CONTINUE TO EXECUTE	1. TO LEARN; TO BE ADDRESSED AS LEARNER
2. TO MAINTAIN PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS	2. TO BELONG; TO BE INCLUDED AS LEARNER
3. TO STIMULATE	3. TO RESPOND
4. TO BE COUNSELLED	4. TO BE ASSURED OF CONTINUING EXPECTATIONS
5. TO REWARD	5. TO DO
6. TO BE AFFIRMED; TO AFFIRM SELF	6. TO BE AFFIRMED

Source: Psychology of Teacher/Pupil Needs in Classroom Interactions. (McGettigan, 1983)

STUDENT MOTIVATION

LEARNER:

IN THIS CLASS I FIND OUT EVERY DAY

A. HOW I'M DOING

B. WHERE I'M GOING

C. WHO I AM

BECAUSE

THE TEACHER:

IN THIS CLASS

A. TEACHES WHAT THE SKILL IS

B. SHOWS ME HOW TO DO IT

C. COMMENTS ON MY PROGRESS
COMMENTS ON HOW TO IMPROVE

Source: Psychology of Teacher/Pupil Needs in Classroom Interactions. (McGettigan, 1983)